

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner*  
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#### **COMMERCIAL CHUM SALMON PERIOD THIS THURSDAY EAST OF CAPE NOME**

On Thursday, July 18, there will be one 24-hour commercial fishing period directed on chum salmon in Norton Sound Subdistrict 1, the Nome Subdistrict, from 6:00 p.m. Thursday, July 18 to 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 19. However, commercial salmon fishing during this opening is only being permitted for waters from Cape Nome east to Topkok Head. Permit holders are limited to 100 fathoms of net in aggregate length and gillnets must have a mesh size no greater than 6 inches in length.

The Nome Subdistrict commercial chum salmon fishery was closed in 1991 due to chronically low runs and difficulty meeting escapement needs. Since the mid-2000s, runs of chum salmon to the Nome Subdistrict have been sufficient to meet escapement goals in most years and provide surpluses for subsistence harvest needs. As a result, the State of Alaska Board of Fisheries passed regulations in January, 2013 allowing for a commercial chum salmon fishery based on conservative management guidelines. Additionally, the board adopted regulations that divided Nome Subdistrict into two management areas: one from Cape Nome east to Topkok Head, and another from Cape Nome west to Cape Rodney. This regulation was adopted to provide the department with guidance to manage subsistence and commercial salmon fisheries east or west of Cape Nome based on escapement information from drainages located east or west of Cape Nome. Chum salmon escapement goals for the Snake and Nome River drainages, which are located west of Cape Nome, were not met in 2009 and 2012.

The chum salmon escapement goal range has already been achieved at Eldorado River, the index river for chum salmon escapement east of Cape Nome, and a limited commercial chum salmon fishery should not jeopardize subsistence uses or escapement needs. Projections of chum salmon escapement based on historical data for western Nome Subdistrict drainages will most likely approach or exceed the upper bound of established escapement goal ranges. As of July 16, cumulative escapement counts of chum salmon at the Eldorado, Nome, and Snake Rivers are 12,788, 1,263, and 872 chum salmon, respectively. Harvestable surpluses of chum salmon are available east of Cape Nome and there is buyer interest to purchase these fish. Interested permit holders should contact Norton Sound Seafood Products in Nome at 443-2304 if they intend to fish. Additional commercial fishing periods are possible early next week depending on catch rates, escapements, and interest. The area west of Cape Nome could also be opened to

commercial fishing if escapements of chum salmon continue to approach escapement goal ranges in the Snake and Nome River drainages. Good Luck and Good Fishing.